

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR SP

SUBJ: SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTER COMMENTS ON FOREIGN POLICY

1. NEW SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTER, CORTINA MAURI, COMMENTED ON SPAIN'S FOREIGN POLICY IN CEREMONY MARCH 28 IN WHICH HE WAS HONORED BY THE CATALAN SOCIETY OF MADRID.

2. CORTINA DESCRIBED HIS TASK AS AN EFFORT TO EXPAND SPAIN'S RELATIONS WITH EUROPE, THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE U.S. IN THAT ORDER. HE THEN MENTIONED THE DESIRABILITY OF DEVELOPING COOPERATION WITH THE HISPANIC PEOPLES AND THE ARAB COUNTRIES WHICH HAD BECOME "DECISIVE INTERLOCUTORS FOR ENERGY MATTERS". LASTLY, HE REFERRED TO THE NEED TO BUILD UP RELATIONS WITH THE THIRD WORLD AND TO CONTINUE PROCESS OF NORMALIZATION WITH COUNTRIES OF EAST EUROPE.

3. AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF HIS APPEARANCE BEFORE THE CATALAN SOCIETY, REPRESENTING IMPORTANT MINORITY IN SPAIN, CORTINA, A CATALAN HIMSELF, EXPLAINED THAT THERE COULD BE WORKABLE
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FOREIGN POLICY WITHOUT INTERNAL POLITICAL UNITY. SPAIN'S

DIVERSITY OF CULTURES, HE SAID, HAD TO BE HARMONIZED SO THAT SPAIN COULD ACT WITH AUTHORITY IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

4. COMMENT: THIS WAS CORTINA'S FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE IN WHICH HE DISCUSSED FOREIGN AFFAIRS. AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF SOME RESENTMENT EXPRESSED OPENLY AND PRIVATELY BY CATALANS AGAINST AN ALLEGED UNDER-REPRESENTATION IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT, CORTINA'S APPEARANCE SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN CALCULATED TO OFFSET SUCH CRITICISM. HE OBVIOUSLY TOOK ADVANTAGE OF OCCASION TO UNDERSCORE IMPORTANCE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SUBLIMATING INTERNAL DIFFERENCES WHICH HAVE RECENTLY RECEIVED MUCH ATTENTION IN THE WAKE OF THE ALLEGED BASQUE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CORRERO BLANCO'S ASSASSINATION AND THE BISHOP ANOVEROS CONTROVERSY.

5. ACCORDING TO THE ONLY PRESS CORRESPONDENT TO HAVE INTERVIEWED CORTINA SINCE HIS APPOINTMENT IN EARLY JANUARY, THE NEW FOREIGN MINISTER IS TACITURN. HE TOLD THIS CORRESPONDENT THAT HE HAD ACCEPTED THE INTERVIEW RELUCTANTLY AND DID NOT INTEND TO MEET WITH THE PRESS OFTEN DURING HIS TENURE. THE CORRESPONDENT DESCRIBED THE INTERVIEW AS THE MOST UNSATISFACTORY OF ALL THAT HE HAS HELD WITH THE VARIOUS NEW MINISTERS. (WHILE CORTINA MAY BE RETICENT IN DEALING WITH THE PRESS, HE IS ARTICULATE AND EXPRESSIVE IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION.)
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